

Purpose and Practices of Public Health

Ten Essential Services

What Public Health Does (The Purpose of Public Health)

The fundamental obligation of agencies responsible for population-based health is to:

- Prevent epidemics and the spread of disease
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Prevent injuries
- Promote and encourage healthy behaviors and mental health
- Respond to disasters and assist communities in recovery
- Assure the quality and accessibility of health services

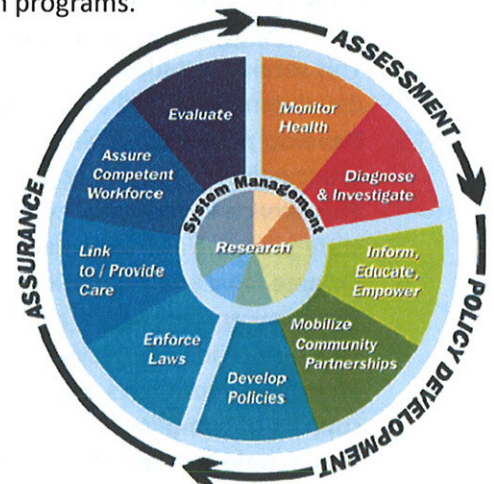
These responsibilities describe and define the function of public health in assuring the availability of quality health services. Both distinct from and encompassing clinical services, public health's role is to assure the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives, through community-wide prevention and protection programs.

Core Public Health Functions

Assessment

Policy Development

Assurance



How Public Health Serves (The Practice of Public Health)

Public health serves communities and individuals within them by providing an array of essential services.

Many of these services are invisible to the public. Typically, the public only becomes aware of the need for public health services when a problem develops (e.g., an epidemic occurs). The *practice* of public health becomes the following ten "essential services":

The 10 Essential Public Health Services

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems